

LATE 00163

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Jagan is difficult to deal with. He has an expressed preference for "socialist" states and he persists in portraying the United States as unalterably opposed to him.

Jagan professes resentment over the lack of large US aid projects. Yet the assistance that has been given has received only grudging recognition from his government. This assistance has included dredging of the Berbice River bar, medical aid, and student scholarships. This year, while Jagan was seeking Western aid, his party newspaper, The Mirror, was criticizing the United States and President Kennedy.

Many Guianese fear Jagan is determined to install a dictatorial Marxist state as soon as independence is granted. While it is clear from public statements that some members of Jagan's government, such as Acting Premier Benn, are more openly pro-Communist than Jagan, he is either unable or unwilling to curb them. Some of his remarks raise doubts that he would even seek to. For example, Jagan admitted in June 1962, during inquiry into the February riots, that he was a Communist by at least one definition. Speaking before his People's Progressive Party (PPP) congress this year, he said "we must not be divided on the issue of Communism; Communism is winning throughout the world; it will win everywhere." Jagan also has declared his admiration for Castro and his belief that Caribbean unity is impossible without Cuba.

Relations with Cuba have become particularly close with at least one-third of the colony's rice now being sold to Cuba under an agreement first signed in 1961 and renewed this year. In August 1962, a shipment of 30,000 sacks of Cuban cement was received in the colony. In late June 1963, a contract was announced for the sale of 50,000 railroad ties to Cuba. This last transaction smacks of Cuban aid to Jagan since no ties have been delivered but an advance payment has been made by the Cubans.

Jagan also is seeking economic ties with European members of the Communist bloc and he has sanctioned a series of visits to Communist nations by his ministers. Last winter a Soviet trade mission visited British Guiana and agreed to buy 10,000 tons of rice. The Guianese are buying 15,000 tons of Soviet fertilizer. A Guianese trade group has been to East Germany and the East Germans are committed to purchase 20,000 tons of Guianese rice.

In 1962, Jagan's wife, Janet, made a swing through the bloc which included visits to Moscow, Warsaw, Prague, and Peiping, as well as Havana. During the polio epidemic last year, the Minister of Health left for Cuba while US doctors were assisting the population.

Although Jagan has said he wants private investment and favors a mixed economy with both government and private sectors, his policies have discouraged foreign investment and business expansion. During the general strike, the regime tried to undercut private outlets by its method of distributing flour and fuel imported from the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Trends Jagan has inaugurated in public education also cause concern. The government has now inaugurated a new university of "socialist" orientation in preference to continuing association with the West Indies University in Jamaica, and over 50 students have left in the last year for Cuba and the bloc. In December of 1962, Jagan's People's Progressive Party (PPP) admitted having received about \$8,300 from the Soviet Ministry of Education, claiming that the money was used to pay student air fares.

Being far more interested in political maneuvering and grandiose plans than the details of administration, Jagan is now in the midst of a public relations campaign to prove he is a misunderstood moderate maligned by the US. When pressed, however, Jagan is unwilling to deny his Marxist principles or his friendship for Cuba. Even with independence and Western aid, there seems little likelihood he would reverse his present course.